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GENERAL NOTES.

The Meeting of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America.—The tenth annual meeting of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America was held at the Yerkes Observatory, Williams Bay, Wisconsin, August 18-21, 1909. The regular sessions for the presentation and discussion of papers and for the transaction of business by the society did not begin until Thursday morning, August 19th, but the Council of the society met at the observatory on Wednesday evening, and by the courtesy of Director FROST and Professor BURNHAM all members of the society who were present were given an opportunity to look through the 40-inch telescope, under Professor BURNHAM's direction. Fortunately the sky was clear and the seeing fair, and, indeed, the society was favored with almost ideal weather throughout its sessions. The preceding week had been one of sultry and oppressive heat, but a heavy electrical storm on Monday night cleared the atmosphere, so that the following days of the week were only pleasantly warm and the nights for the most part clear.

This initial courtesy on the part of the staff of the Yerkes Observatory was only an indication of the cordial hospitality shown by them to the society throughout the following days. In the secretary's announcements of the meeting it was stated that members attending would be able to secure convenient quarters at Point Comfort on Lake Geneva, not far from the observatory buildings; but on our arrival we found the members of the staff insisting upon entertaining as many of us as their house-room would permit. The present writer had the very great pleasure of spending the three days as the guest of Professor and Mrs. BARNARD. Not content with this, we were all entertained at lunch each day by Mrs. FROST and the other ladies; Mrs. FROST's house was open for a reception and tea at the close of the Thursday afternoon session; the observatory was thrown open for general inspection, under guidance of the staff, on Friday before the afternoon session, and at the close of that session, by courtesy of Mr. RYERSON and other residents on the lake shore, we were treated to a launch ride about Lake Geneva.

I have purposely mentioned the social features of the week before giving any account of the sessions themselves, for, after all, the most profitable part of such a meeting is the opportunity it offers for the better mutual acquaintance of workers in related lines of research and for the free interchange of views, and the social gatherings served these ends perhaps even better than the formal discussions of the papers. The fact that there was a very large attendance of members from all parts of the country—over fifty being registered—made this meeting an unusually favorable one for the promotion of acquaintanceship.

The papers themselves were of the greatest interest, and there were forty-two of them. Many of them, as, for example, PARKHURST's "Precautions Necessary in Photographic Photometry," MOULTON's "Some Considerations of Globular Star Clusters," and BARNARD's "On the Photographs of Comet *c* 1908 (MOREHOUSE)," led to considerable discussion. The last-named paper, like many others, was fully illustrated by lantern slides, and opportunity was also given for examining the beautiful stereoscopic views that Professor BARNARD has prepared from his negatives of this comet.

It is impossible to give here even by title all the papers presented for our consideration. They treated, among other topics, of new designs of instruments, cameras, spectrographs, etc., new plans for tabulating the Moon's longitude, the problem of three bodies from the standpoint of spectroscopy, a proposed method of studying solar radiation at great altitudes, reports of progress in various researches, the spectrum of meteors, and the present needs of astronomy.

Aside from the formal papers, several other reports and resolutions were presented that aroused interesting discussions. Among these was a resolution relating to the current newspaper articles on signaling to *Mars*. It was finally decided that a statement should be prepared by a committee, the wording to be at their discretion, to the effect that in the present state of our knowledge it did not seem necessary or desirable for the society seriously to consider this matter.

The proposed change of name of the society to "The American Astronomical Society" was also discussed at some length, but the present name was retained by a decisive vote.

Professor COMSTOCK gave the report for the Committee on Comets. In brief, he stated that arrangements had been made that would make it possible to photograph Comet Halley from practically all longitudes on the Earth; for means will be forthcoming to bridge the great gap between the Lick and Solar observatories in California and observatories in Eastern Asia, by providing a temporary station at a suitable point in the Pacific Ocean. The committee had also secured promises that Professor BARNARD would outline a program of photographic observations, Professor FROST one of spectrographic observations, and Professor E. C. PICKERING one of photometric observations on this comet. These programs will be presented to astronomers in ample time to permit general co-operation in their execution.

Abstracts of all the papers presented will be printed in *Science* in the near future. It was also decided to issue a pamphlet giving a *résumé* of the history of the society and of the ten meetings so far held, the pamphlet to include also the constitution and by-laws of the society and a list of members.

R. G. AITKEN.

Two New Calculating Tables.—Dr. J. PETERS: Neue Rechentafeln für Multiplication und Division mit allen ein—bis vierstelligen Zahlen. G. REIMER, Berlin, 1909.

Dr. O. LOHSE: Tafeln für numerisches Rechnen mit Maschinen. W. ENGLEMAN, Leipzig, 1909.

It is the experience of all who find it necessary to carry through extended computations that it is scarcely possible to have at hand too many tables and other helps for the rapid performance of the different processes involved; it will be found that these two excellent tables will at once fill a distinct gap which has hitherto existed in the working library of every computer. Dr. PETER'S Rechentafeln contain the products of all one- and two-figure numbers by all numbers up to 9,999, making it possible to take out the product of two four-figure numbers from the same half-page, with only about one half the labor involved in performing the same process with CRELLE'S Tables. For all work, least squares, etc., necessitating the use of four figures, it will be found a great time-saver. Moreover,

the numbers ending in a cipher are not omitted, as in the older edition of CRELLE, a convenience which will be appreciated by the practised computer, and a liberal use has been made of rulings and spacings so as to save the eye as far as possible from the strain incident to selecting figures from a solid, unbroken page.

LOHSE'S *Tafeln* have been published to facilitate the greatly increasing use of the calculating machine. The first table gives the reciprocals of numbers to five places, thus making it possible to eliminate division, always more troublesome than multiplication with the calculating machine. Following this is a five-place table of the natural trigonometric functions to each hundredth of a degree; in this table all six functions are given—sine, cosecant, tangent, cotangent, secant, and cosine. Tables of square roots, and a convenient collection of trigonometrical and differential formulæ close the book. The arrangement and typography are excellent.

H. D. C.

Notes from "Science."—A bronze memorial tablet in honor of the late Dr. GEORGE W. HOUGH has been unveiled with appropriate exercises in the Dearborn Observatory of Northwestern University.

The University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, has received under the provisions of the will of the late Rear-Admiral WILLIAM HARKNESS, professor of mathematics, U. S. N., almost his entire large and valuable collection of astronomical and scientific instruments and a considerable part of his library. The instruments, including an Alvan Clark telescope, comprised the equipment for a private observatory he intended to erect. The devise of books included over sixteen hundred volumes and about seven thousand unbound periodicals and pamphlets. The university has placed the works on astronomy and physics in a separate section of its library, as the basis of a scientific department, to be known as the Harkness Scientific Library.

Mr. PHILIP FOX, hitherto instructor in astrophysics at the Yerkes Observatory, University of Chicago, assumed the duties of professor of astronomy in the Northwestern University and director of the Dearborn Observatory, Evanston, Illinois, on

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September 1st. He is succeeded at the Yerkes Observatory by Dr. FREDERICK SLOCUM, for several years assistant professor of astronomy at Brown University, who has just returned from a year in Europe, principally spent at the Royal Astrophysical Observatory at Potsdam.
